

John S. Fogg Shoe Factory
4-10 Union Street, Columbian Square
Weymouth, Massachusetts
Norfolk County

HAER No. MA-42

HAER
MASS,
11-WEYMO,
4-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

JOHN S. FOGG SHOE FACTORY
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Date: ca. 1857
Location: 4-10 Union Street, Columbian Square, Weymouth, Massachusetts
Designed by: Unknown
Owner: Pleasantview Realty Trust

Significance: Weymouth history has been closely tied with that of shoemaking in Massachusetts, and, in the 19th century, "Weymouth Grade" was synonymous with high quality. By the 1760s, the town had left the handicraft stage of shoe manufacture, and by 1810, the central shop, which "put out" for home work several of the parts of shoe manufacture, had begun to appear. By the 1840s and 1850s, the central shop had expanded. Almost all were wood frame structures, and very few have survived. Even in 1860, the John S. Fogg Factory was considered a model of its class; today, it is a very rare example of a once common building type, and of considerable architectural merit. Bates Torrey, in The Shoe Industry of Weymouth (Weymouth, 1933) describes the building:

"The John S. Fogg factory, which is about the only edifice of War-times still standing with much of its original form, figured in 1860 as a model of its class. This building was erected about 1857, and proudly claimed the distinction of having an elevator (worked by hand power), a cement floor in the basement sole-leather room, and was heated by steam. It may have displayed other novelties of construction and convenience, being considered such an unusual structure. The location on the corner of Pleasant and Union Streets warranted the thrifty sub-letting of stores, but the opposite end of the first floor contained the receiving-room of the factory, to accomodate trucks and workmen, and where there was a separate space set off by an iron fence to hold a safe and the desks and customary furniture of the accounting department. Half of the second floor was the cutting-room, and the remaining area was divided between the treeing-room and one for "dressing" and packing the product."

A portion of the third floor was occupied by Cobb (Charles S.) & Fogg (John S.), who manufactured shoes and the attic, under a sightly cupola, by Isaac Daggett for a

stitching-room. The outbreak of a fire there one day demonstrated that the building was something of a fire-trap, in spite of its pretensions to completeness. Above the modern storefronts of the first story, the building is virtually intact, complete with elaborately turned eave brackets and heavy wood lintels over third floor windows. The cupola shown in 19th century illustrations is missing.

Historian: Peter H. Stott, 1979

Transmitted by: Monica E. Hawley, Historian, 1984